

“Pride & Humility”
Psalm 131
Mercy Hill Church | January 23, 2022

131 O LORD, my heart is not lifted up;
my eyes are not raised too high;
I do not occupy myself with things
too great and too marvelous for me.
² But I have calmed and quieted my soul,
like a weaned child with its mother;
like a weaned child is my soul within me.
³ O Israel, hope in the LORD
from this time forth and forevermore.

Introduction

- Throughout history, the Christian faith has valued humility and warned against pride:
 - “The three greatest virtues of Christianity: humility, humility, and humility.” St. Augustine
 - “Be humble or you'll stumble.” D.L. Moody
 - “At every stage of our Christian development and in every sphere of our Christian discipleship, pride is the greatest enemy and humility our greatest friend.” John Stott
- In this Psalm (and throughout Scripture), we aren’t given a Webster’s dictionary definition of pride & humility -- but we are given examples and pictures of what pride & humility can look like. In other words, Psalm 131 doesn’t give us a strict definition, but several descriptions.
 - “One of the shortest psalms to read, but one of the longest to learn.” C.H. Spurgeon

Context

- Psalm 131 is part of a collection of Psalms known as the Psalms of Ascents (Psalm 120 – 134), sung by believers in the Old Testament as they journeyed up to Jerusalem for annual religious feasts and festivals (cf. Deuteronomy 16:16).

1. Aspects of Pride (v.1)

- Pride: Looks down on (undervalues) others & overvalues oneself
 - *“My eyes are not raised too high”* = “haughty” = superior, arrogant, disdainful
- Pride: Both internal (heart attitude) and external (expressed)
- Pride & Presumption
 - Cf. Sermon on James 4:13-16 ([link](#))
 - Isaiah 55:8-9 *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. ⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.*
 - Pride and presumption in knowing and understanding the things of God – acknowledging and recognizing our limit(ation)s.
 - “Maturity means accepting things we can’t fully comprehend”

2. Aspects of Humility (v.2)

- Picture of a weaned child and its mother:
 - Humility & Stillness
 - Humility & Contentment
 - Humility & Simplicity (Single-focus)
 - Humility & Dependency
 - “Christian faith is not neurotic dependency but childlike trust” Eugene Peterson
- Another picture: Luke 10:38-41 Martha & Mary
- Andrew Murray: “Humility is perfect quietness of heart. It is for me to have no trouble; never to be fretted or vexed or irritated or sore or disappointed. It is to expect nothing, to wonder at nothing that is done to me, to feel nothing done against me. It is to be at rest when nobody praises me and when I am blamed or despised. It is to have a blessed home in the Lord where I can go in and shut the door and kneel to my Father in secret and be at peace as in a deep sea of calmness when all around is trouble. It is the fruit of the Lord Jesus Christ's redemptive work on Calvary's cross, manifested in those of His own who are definitely subject to the Holy Spirit.”

3. A Renewed Trust in God (v.3)

- Pride and humility are mirrors which reveal what our (future) hope is in – and ultimately what or who we worship!
- Isaiah 2:11, 17 *The haughty looks of man shall be brought low, and the lofty pride of men shall be humbled, and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day...And the haughtiness of man shall be humbled, and the lofty pride of men shall be brought low, and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.*
- The call to humility is to consider: “Are we glorifying, exalting, promoting, emphasizing, thinking, or obsessed with ourselves? Or are we glorifying, exalting, promoting, emphasizing, thinking, obsessing over God?”

Christ & Gospel Connection

- In Christ we see the perfect example and embodiment of humility – from his incarnation, his life, his ministry and interactions with others, and ultimately to his crucifixion on the cross.
 - “It is pride that made redemption needful. It is from our pride we need, above everything, to be redeemed.” Andrew Murray
- Jesus life of humility is the path we are called to in the Christian faith – in fact, one could say the whole (i.e. beginning, middle and end of the) Christian life is about humility.
 - “They that know God will be humble and they that know themselves cannot be proud.” John Flavel
- We can’t “self-improve” our way out of pride – we need the Gospel (good news) of who Jesus is and what he’s done for us, a big(ger) view of God’s holiness and love, and the power of the Holy Spirit to transform and free us!
 - “The true way to be humble is not to stoop until you are smaller than yourself, but to stand at your real height against some higher nature (God) that will show you what the real smallness of your greatness is.” Philip Brooks